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HARVEY
Aluminum Sales Inc.

REPLY TO DISTRICT OFFICE
20734

January 22, 1966

Mr. Tom Wicker
New York Times
1701 K St., nw
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Wicker,

Following TV pictures and commentary of the use of gas in Vietnam earlier this week I had intended writing you but forgot. I dont know if you are interested, or if the Times has covered it, but there is and always had been wide misrepresenation about the chemical agents involved.

The so-called "non-toxic" gases are usually but not always that. Most information about them relates to their dissemination by cannisters of limited contents and range, not to their confinement in tunnels or shelters or to their widespread distribution by air, of areas so large escape is impossible. They can and have had serious effects on people. Before your time, there were two Senate investigations that went into this. In each case, one of the companies whose product is not in use was involved. It is "Federal Laboratories", Pittsburg, Pa. The Nye Munitions investigation in 1934-5 and the Thomas-LaFollette "Labor Spy" investigation (1937-8) examined Federal labs. These gases have been lethal.

The defoliants are neither harmless nor temporary in their effects. Rachel Carson devoted some space and attention to them in "Silent Spring". Theys are carcinogens and they sterilize the ground for some time. I believe they deposit long-lasting and harmful residues. With the saturation of vast areas by B52s, some of the most fertile land in the country must now be worthless for the forseeable future. It is my recollection (which may not be accurate) that U.S. law and regulations prohibit their use near animals, and that food containing even the most minute traces is unfit for consumption, by either humans or animals. Remember the cranberries?

Nothing is new on my book. It continues to elicit praises but no contract. This past week I have been the subject of inept investigation, at whose instigation I do not know. I have been working on the other book I told you about. My researches have been fruitful. If you'd like me to tell you what confirmation I already have in hand, let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg

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